



Vital Records

The LDHH/OPH Center for Records & Statistics maintains viable working relationships with local physicians and coroners who certify cause-of-death information on death certificates and whose input is critical in ensuring complete, accurate mortality data.

The VSCP facilitates the release of Louisiana mortality data on the national level and for comparisons of cause-of-death data with other states. Such information allows federal public-health authorities to discern possible interventions in, and funding needs for, the states based on their respective statistics. Louisiana's participation helps the LDHH/OPH Center for Records & Statistics with critical funding otherwise not available through the State General Fund.

The mission of the Center for Records and Statistics (CRS) is to administer a statewide central system of Vital Records and Statistics by registering and certifying the facts of births, deaths and marriages for Louisiana citizens. CRS participates in the National Vital Statistics Systems and responds to the needs of health programs, health care providers, businesses, researchers, educational institutions and the public.

The day-to-day operation of the Vital Records Registry involves highly complex processes. The Louisiana Vital Records Registry operates as a centralized system that supports 62 parishes Local Registrars and nine full customer service centers by providing these locations with the ability to issue certified copies of vital event documents.

The center collects, transcribes, compiles, and analyzes reports, preserves, amends, and issues vital records including birth, death, fetal death, abortion, marriage, and divorce certificates. The center is charged with operating the Louisiana Putative Father Registry, the Orleans Parish Marriage License Office, and with recording all adoptions, legitimations, and other judicial edicts that affect the state's vital records. In addition to handling vital-event records, CRS issues burial transit permits to licensed funeral directors statewide. The center also oversees Vital Records Customer Service which involves education and training services provided to the general public and to the initiators of vital event records.

The Center for Records and Statistics CRS provides services to all residents of Louisiana and to native-born Louisianans who no longer reside in the state. Individuals who are born, married, divorced, or die in Louisiana, their immediate families, certain state and federal agencies, and other recipients of vital-event information as approved by the State Legislature.

CRS maintains relationships with the following:

Other offices and programs within Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH), state/federal/local government agencies, including the Governor's Office, the State Legislature, Vital Records Offices in all fifty (50) states, the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, and the United States Department of Homeland Security.

CRS receives most of its funds from the issuance of certified copies of vital records and by completing alterations and corrections to records. Self-generate approximately \$4.7 million annually. Other monies come from the State General Fund, federal-grant contracts (e.g., Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, NCHS, Office of Personnel Management, Social Security Administration), and interagency transfers.

Approximately 494,000 certified copies of vital records are issued annually. The number of customers varies depending on the need for vital-records documents and statistical reports. For example, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, individual needs for birth certificates for travel increased dramatically worldwide, as did efforts by the United States Department of Homeland Security to prevent identity theft. Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, needs for birth certificates and death certificates increased dramatically due to records lost during the storms.

Number of Records Processed:

	<u>FY 03/04</u>	<u>FY 04/05</u>	<u>FY 05/06</u>
Birth record intake	65,696	65,551	56,179
Death record intake	43,597	44,385	39,165
Marriage record intake	37,843	38,551	7,108
Divorce record intake	15,326	15,538	3,568
Abortion record intake	10,761	12,150	800
Fetal death record	570	593	372
Number of vital records processed	173,793	176,768	107,192

Vital Statistics Cooperative Program

As a participant in the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program (VSCP), the Center for Records & Statistics within the Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals, Office of Public Health

(LDHH/OPH) transmits cause-of-death data from Louisiana death certificates to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). The VSCP is a federal-state partnership which allows for state vital-statistics data to be collected on the national level. The federal government, in return, provides the states and territories funding for vital-statistics collection initiatives. In Louisiana specifically, two members of the Records & Statistics staff are responsible for generating files with the data in question through the use of specialized NCHS-approved software.

Better Health

By virtue of the VSCP, NCHS is the recipient of cause-of-death data from Louisiana. These data are then analyzed and released with comparable data from the other states and the territories of the United States.

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